

The Tuxedo Park Garden Club

For Our Benefit...



How Vegetated Buffers Protect Our Lakes and Rivers

What we do on our own property directly affects our lakes, streams and rivers. There are benefits to maintaining or restoring vegetated buffers along our shorelines and there is harm brought by practices that remove natural vegetation and create impervious surfaces. Tuxedo Lake is our reservoir.

- A vegetated buffer is a natural protective area between a body of water and human activity, such as development of agriculture. It is a “living filter” because it captures many of the pollutants that travel through it.
- Buffers filter out sediment and debris from surface runoff. These pollutants include sediment, sand, salt and other pollutants from roads and driveways, pesticides and fertilizers from home gardens and lawns.
- Vegetated buffers disperse and slow down the flow of surface waters, trap sediment, extend retention times and increase the rate of infiltration. The stems of plants and leaf litter within the buffer physically slow the pace of surface runoff. The slower the movement of water, the less power it has to erode soil and carry sediments.
- Plant root systems capture and transform nutrients and other pollutants and transform them into less harmful forms. The longer the runoff is in contact with the soil, the more time plants and soil microorganisms have to absorb and transform pollution.
- Allowing an overly large lakefront lawn to revert to a more natural mix of lawn near the house for personal use, combined with native grasses, shrubs, wildflowers, ferns and trees, will filter runoff, increase the lake’s water quality and restore the natural habitat of butterflies, birds and other wildlife.
- In addition to creating an ideal environment for surface runoff, the removal of leaf litter also removes a natural beneficial fungi that plays a significant role in killing ticks. If the leaf litter is blown away, so too is the beneficial fungi.